

The Department of Child Services has enacted an aggressive recruitment program. The Department has utilized the State Job Bank as the mechanism for applicants to learn of position openings and as the primary avenue to apply for a position in the Department. The Department has also used local newspaper advertisements, job fairs, communication with providers, and local radio and television. Director James Payne has frequently highlighted the changes being implemented within the Department and the opportunities available for Hoosiers to join the Department of Child Services. This effort has led to an abundance of applicants and healthy number of high quality hires.

The Department of Child Services currently has 48 vacancies with the ranks of Family Case Manager 2 positions, our front-line staff. All current vacancies will have a trainee hired for the position and in training by the end of February. We will continue to have and fill vacancies; however the number is expected to decrease within the next four months.

Indiana's Department of Child Services' goal is to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children who come to the attention of our child welfare system. In order to provide for these outcomes workload for staff must be at acceptable levels. Staff committed to working with Indiana children and families have traditionally had high caseloads that prevented them from performing family centered practice. Caseloads must permit such activities and opportunities. Currently no universally accepted formula for computing caseloads exists, but the DCS is working to reach the Child Welfare League of America's caseload standard of 12 new active investigations a month or 17 children per month. To measure our caseloads, we extract data from our Indiana Child Welfare Information System. We measure caseloads for every worker, then every county, and then every region. To determine caseloads, we divide the number of new investigations received and assigned at the county by 12. We also divide the number of children we hold the responsibility to provide services for and divide the number by 17. With this information we can determine how many staff are needed for the county to reach the goal of 12 new investigations per month or 17 ongoing children. We have prioritized the counties with the largest workloads as those who will be deployed the first new hires.

While we have not met the caseload standard of 12 or 17, we continue to progress to meet this standard. In order to meet this standard, we must recruit and retain staff. We are expanding our recruiting to all forms of medium and are very confident that we will meet, if not, surpass the 200 caseworkers hires that are required by recent legislation. We hire twenty new FCMs each month, and hire for additional vacancies that exist. A training begins every two weeks, and upon hire the trainees immediately begin training to allow for them to complete training and transition to the county to begin conducting case management.

It is the hope the agency that we will be allowed to continue our hiring without having to wait for FY 07 to begin and therefore will have hired and trained 400 new Family Case Manager 2s before the end of FY 07.

We have formed 18 regions to provide for the delivery of child welfare services. Prior to our reorganization of our executive management we had 6 regions. With this structure the regional managers were primarily the conduit of information exchange between the central office and local offices. However, with this reorganization, we know that the regional managers will have the opportunity to effectuate change in practice model and closely monitor the identified outcomes for our agency. All 18 regional managers have been hired.

An initial task that we know will allow for the improvement of child welfare practice is the development of regional service councils in all 18 regions. These councils will play a role in assessing the services available in communities, identifying needed services for family and ensuring that the needed services are available in these communities. Many of our partners will be included on these councils, including judges, foster parents, GAL / CASA, and DCS staff. The core membership for these councils are currently being designated.